



**Embassy of the United States of  
America  
Algiers, Algeria**

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For Immediate Release  
Press Release

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**U.S. Embassy Sponsors Regional Conference and Training with Antiquities Coalition to  
Preserve Maghreb Manuscripts**

In a project sponsored by the US Embassy in Algiers, the Antiquities Coalition completed a three-day virtual conference in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Arts of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, on digitization and cultural preservation in the Maghreb region. Over three one-hour sessions, this forum convened national officials, librarians, and heritage experts for a discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing Maghrebi countries as they digitize their irreplaceable cultural materials. Participants from Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia attended.

One result of the conference was the immediate implementation of a new training program for all interested Arabic speakers. The Antiquities Coalition and its partner, the Egyptian Heritage Rescue Foundation (EHRF), will offer training on the conservation, stabilization, inventory, and digitization of manuscripts. EHRF Director Abdelhamid Salah will lead the free, online webinar. The session will be held on April 10 and is open to experts, librarians, and interested members of the public who are working in the field of cultural heritage preservation in the Maghreb.

Algeria's Minister of Culture and the Arts, H.E. Malika Bendouda opened the conference by saluting the efforts of the participants from neighboring countries of Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania. "This virtual event is very important in many ways. It brought together experts from across the region to discuss the contemporary subject of digitization of some of the world's oldest and most revered objects, the cultural patrimony held by Algeria and our neighbors. And with the immediate follow-up training, we are doing something about it through regional cooperation and capacity building."

The first session, moderated by Adam Sigelman of the U.S. Embassy in Algiers, focused on developing an understanding of how each country approaches digitization of cultural heritage at the national level.

One common challenge faced by all the Maghreb countries, how to protect and digitize privately held rare manuscripts, was at the heart of the second session. This session was open to the public and had viewership from over 100 participants. Through the discussion and a poll of the audience, the top three challenges identified were Technical Skills, Data Management, and Financial Challenges.

The final sessions brought the lessons of the first two sessions together. The expert panel, moderated by Antiquities Coalition Co-Founder and Project Director Peter Herdrich, featured a discussion focused on regional collaboration and capacity building to address challenges common to all countries.

After discussing the importance of regional collaboration and capacity building, Herdrich announced the upcoming virtual training, emphasizing that attendees should feel free to share and invite experts, practitioners, and others who are working on cultural heritage preservation of the Maghreb.

To Watch the Public Session on Digitization of Materials in the Maghreb:

<https://youtu.be/tgilsTPYOHw>

To Sign Up for the Training Session on Manuscript Preservation :

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_LsCl3keBSQirNeXZC9Da9g](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LsCl3keBSQirNeXZC9Da9g)

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